



Loudoun County Sheriff's Office  
False Alarm Reduction Unit  
P.O. Box 3232  
Leesburg, Virginia 20177  
Phone (703) 737-8344 Fax (703) 737-8354

## False Alarm Appeal Guidelines

Loudoun County Ordinance §655.02(1) defines a False Alarm as: *"An alarm dispatch request ...when the responding" law enforcement officer "finds no evidence of a criminal offense or attempted criminal offense after having completed a timely investigation of the alarm site."*

Ordinance §655.08(a) provides for a false alarm response fine to be assessed for the third and subsequent false alarms within a calendar year. Failure to remit the false alarm response fine will be considered a violation of the ordinance and the alarm administrator may suspend law enforcement response by revoking the alarm registration. Under the ordinance provisions, law enforcement may refuse to respond to an alarm dispatch request for an alarm site in revoked status unless there is separate indication of a crime in progress.

Ordinance §655.11 allows an alarm user **to appeal an assessed fine or registration revocation** by filing a **written** request with the False Alarm Reduction Unit (FARU). Each appeal request filed with FARU **must be accompanied by a \$100 appeal filing fee and must be submitted within 30 days of the false alarm notification date**. The appeal should include *specific details regarding the circumstances that caused the alarm, as well as a statement indicating why the alarm activation should be not considered a false alarm*. Please include any documentation supporting the claim--**the burden of proof rests with the alarm user!** The appeal and fee should be mailed to the following address:

**False Alarm Reduction Unit, P.O. Box 3232, Leesburg, Virginia 20177**

*Appeal requests received without the filing fee or outside the 30 day filing period will be automatically denied.*

**When considering whether to request an appeal, a good rule of thumb is to consider whether any criminal activity occurred. The following circumstances are not considered a legitimate reason to excuse a false alarm:**

- An occurrence where no evidence of criminal activity is present
- Faulty, defective or malfunctioning equipment supplied by the alarm business
- Improper installation or maintenance by the alarm business
- Improper monitoring or notification delays by the alarm business
- User errors such as improper codes
- Alarm activations caused by power outages of less than two hours
- Mistakes made by contractors, cleaning crews, employees, relatives, or anyone authorized to access premises
- Items within the home or business which move and cause motion detectors to activate (i.e. curtains, signs, balloons, etc.).
- Glass breakage detectors which activate due to noises other than actual glass breakage
- Doors or windows that become loose and cause a break in the contacts which activates the alarm
- Caretakers who watch homes or businesses when owners are away
- Pets, rodents, or wildlife

**This list is intended as a guide to assist alarm users in deciding whether to appeal a false alarm or contact their alarm provider for discussion. It is not intended to cover every situation where an appeal may be denied.**

Please visit our website at <http://www.loudoun.gov/sheriff> for more information on the ordinance and helpful alarm operation tips and guidelines.



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## Account Status Appeal Guidelines

If the Alarm Administrator denies the **the issuance, renewal or reinstatement of an alarm registration or revokes a registration**, Ordinance §655.11 allows an alarm user to **appeal that decision**. Appeals are initiated by filing a **written** request with the False Alarm Reduction Unit (FARU). Each appeal request filed with FARU **must be accompanied by a \$100 appeal filing fee and must be submitted within 30 days of the notification date**. The appeal should include *specific details of why the the Administrator's decision should be overturned*. Please include any documentation supporting the claim--**the burden of proof rests with the alarm user!** The appeal and fee should be mailed to the following address:

**False Alarm Reduction Unit, P.O. Box 3232, Leesburg, Virginia 20177**

*Appeal requests received without the filing fee or outside the 30 day filing period will be **automatically denied**.*

When considering whether to request an appeal, **please remember that this is not the time to appeal a false alarm assessment**. Appealing a false alarm assessment is a separate process covered by the False Alarm Appeal Guidelines included with all invoices. Appeals under this guidelines must be restricted to the action taken regarding account status.

Relevant portions of the ordinance are included below for reference:

Ordinance §655.04(a) An alarm user registration shall expire two years from the date of issuance, and must be renewed by submitting an updated application to the Alarm Administrator prior to expiration. If an alarm user fails to renew their registration, the Alarm Administrator shall send notice to the alarm user that they shall have ten (10) days following receipt of such notice to submit a renewal. Failure to submit a renewal may result in suspension of response.

Ordinance §655.10 The Alarm Administrator may suspend law enforcement response to an alarm site by revoking the alarm registration if it is determined that:

- (1) The alarm user has failed to pay assessed fines or fees;
- (2) There is a statement of a material fact known to be false contained in the application for a registration;
- (3) The alarm user has failed to submit a written certification from an alarm installation company that complies with the requirements of this chapter, stating that the alarm system has been inspected and repaired (if necessary) and/or the alarm installation company has conducted additional training.

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